

# Fertilizing a Lawn

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

IN a recent article discussing fertilizers the question of lawn manuring was set aside for consideration at a later date. The time is coming when those of us who take pride in our lawns should think of feeding them.

This question of fertilizing lawns is highly complicated. The study of a good textbook on lawn craft would probably frighten off the average lawn owner leaving him so bewildered that he would probably do nothing at all. The trouble is that grass grows on many differing types of soil and the grass in our gardens may be one or two years old or it may have been a legacy from our grandfathers. The success of our fertilizer applications depends to a great extent on the physical state of the soil underneath the grass.

## Compacted Soil

Too many of our lawns have been rolled and mown, or mown with a heavy roller-type motor mower, for too long. The soil is compacted, the drainage may not be very good and it is difficult for any applications of fertilizers to reach the roots of the plants. So we must go through the motions of scarifying the lawn in each direction with a wire rake and piercing it with some kind of piercing tool to enable the fertilizers to be washed down to the roots.

Then there is the question of the pH of the soil. This is the measure of the soil's acidity or alkalinity. The experts do not give us a great deal of help on this question of pH. The nature of the problem probably precludes any arbitrary recommendations of the correct pH to aim at, but one thing is certain—the finer grasses that we wish to encourage require an acid soil. Of course a soil can be too acid for good turf formation and liming may be necessary, but in these extreme cases the advice of the local horticultural officer of the county horticultural department should be sought and a lime test should be made.

## Proprietary Makes

Having said all this, what can the average lawn owner do to improve the growth of his grass during the coming year? He can buy one of the proprietary lawn fertilizers and apply it according to the maker's instructions. Such is the high level of efficiency of the lawn fertilizers available to-day that he need have little fear that his lawns will not benefit greatly from such treatments. Naturally most of these fertilizers will work more quickly and more effectively if they are well watered in after they have been applied. A good fertilizer applied in the next few weeks will possibly encourage growth of the grass but will also make the weeds grow more strongly. This is all to the good because in May we can apply a selective weedkiller to the lawn.

But the really keen lawn owner may wish to make up his own fertilizer for the lawn and he may do so quite easily by making up the following mixture. This mixture is rich in nitrogen, which is the most important fertilizer for good grass growth. In it all parts are by weight. Mix together 15 parts of sulphate of ammonia, 15 parts of dried blood, 40 parts of fine bone meal, 25 parts of superphosphate, and five parts of sulphate of potash. It must be emphasized that this is a general mixture which should be effective on most lawns.

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